

BLOOD LIONS™

BRED FOR THE BULLET

1 x 54 HD



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INTERNATIONAL

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Blood Lions follows internationally acclaimed environmental journalist and safari operator Ian Michler onto breeding farms to witness the results of lions reared in battery cages—a stark contrast to their wild cousins. Aggressive farmers resent his questioning, but the highly profitable commercialization of lions is plain to see—cub petting, volunteer recruitment, lion walking, hunting and the new lion bone trade are all on the increase and are being justified under the guise of conservation and research. In parallel, the film follows Rick Swazey, an American hunter, who volunteers his services after seeing footage of canned hunts. Rick purchases a lioness online from his home in Hawaii and then travels to South Africa to follow the path canned hunters do.

Each year, over 800 captive, hand-reared lions are shot in South Africa, mostly by international hunters—fueling a multimillion-dollar industry. In that country alone, there are currently between 6,000 and 8,000 predators in captivity, the vast majority of them lions. Most live in appalling conditions with inadequate protocols in place to protect them or regulate either their welfare or the genetic integrity of their bloodlines. Animal breeders claim they are involved in conservation, educational and research initiatives and that the captive-bred population will be the savior of wild lions, but recognized lion ecologists, conservationists and animal welfare experts believe that almost all of these claims are in fact far from the truth.

The reality is that cubs are taken away from their mothers just days after birth to force the lionesses into intensely repetitive reproductive cycles. And once they reach adulthood, many lionesses are shot for their bones which are then shipped to Asia to be used as supplements in the burgeoning “tiger wine” and “tiger cake” industries. Meanwhile, the cubs that get churned out are used in a variety of income streams—from placing them in petting and “walking with lions” facilities to using them to lure unsuspecting volunteers who pay large sums of money into becoming workers in the breeding facilities. Almost all the male lions become victims of the “canned” or “captive” hunting industry—a so-called sport where tame lions become targets in the sights of wealthy trophy hunters. These hunters pay thousands of dollars to shoot lions in circumstances that are anything but wild or sporting.

Blood Lions bears witness, in intimate detail, to how lucrative it is to breed lions for hunting, how the authorities and most professional hunting bodies have become complicit in the practice, and how simple it is to set up a canned hunt. But the film also uncovers some hope, following the latest developments surrounding the Australian government’s announcement of a complete ban on the importation of all African lion trophies into the country. *Blood Lions* is a compelling call to action about the need for a global campaign to stop lions from being bred for the bullet.

CREDITS

Directors: Bruce Young and Nick Chevallier
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